

CUPE Code of Conduct

Jan 20, 2022

The mandate of our union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), is to organize and defend workers and to promote economic and social justice for our members and for all workers. In carrying out our work, we in CUPE strive to promote our core values which include the principles of solidarity, equality, democracy, integrity, and respect. We are committed to mobilizing our energy and skills to work together to promote these values and to attain these goals in our union, our communities, and globally.

CUPE is committed at all levels to creating a union which is inclusive, welcoming, and free from harassment, discrimination and all types of bullying and intimidation. CUPE needs to ensure that we provide a safe environment for members, staff and elected officers to carry out our work. CUPE's expectation is that mutual respect, understanding and co-operation will be the basis of all our interaction.

The Code of Conduct sets out standards of behaviour for participants at national convention, national conferences, schools, meetings, and all other events organized by CUPE National. It is also applicable to structures of CUPE – locals, Provincial and Service Divisions, District Councils, Provincial Unions, Councils of Unions, Provincial Councils of Unions, and Provincial Sectoral Groups. It is consistent with the expectations outlined in the Equality Statement and the CUPE National Constitution.

This Code of Conduct is intended to deal with complaints of inappropriate behaviour at events organized by CUPE National and at events, meetings and activities by other parts of CUPE referenced above. It does not apply to complaints arising in the workplace, as those are dealt with through the grievance procedure and/or the applicable workplace harassment policy.

As CUPE members, staff, and elected officers, we commit to one another and to the union to be governed by the principles of the Code of Conduct and agree to:

- Abide by the provisions of the Equality Statement.
- Respect the views of others, even when we disagree.
- Recognize and value individual differences.
- Communicate openly.
- Support and encourage each other.
- Make sure that we do not harass or discriminate against each other.
- Commit to not engaging in offensive comment or conduct.
- Make sure that we do not act in ways that are aggressive, bullying, or intimidating.
- Take responsibility for not engaging in inappropriate behaviour due to use of alcohol or other drugs while participating in union activities, including social events.

Harassment is objectionable behaviour which may include actions, language, gestures, and/or written material, and which the harasser knows or ought reasonably to know is abusive and unwelcome.

Bullying is a form of harassment which is serious ongoing behaviour which targets an individual or group and which threatens that person or persons' mental and/or physical well-being. A complaint regarding the Code of Conduct will be handled as follows:

1. If possible, a member may attempt to deal directly with the person alleged to have engaged in behaviour contrary to the Code, by asking them to stop such behaviour. If that is not possible, or if it does not resolve the problem, a member may bring forward a complaint.
2. At national convention, national conferences, schools, meetings, and all other events organized by CUPE National, a complaint shall be brought to the attention of an ombudsperson. 3. At a meeting, event, or activity held by a structure of CUPE, should an ombudsperson be available, the same process would be used. Should an ombudsperson not be available, a person properly appointed and designated to be in charge shall receive the complaint.
3. If the complaint involves a staff member, it shall be referred to the appropriate director for investigation and the complaint shall be dealt with in accordance with the applicable staff collective agreement. If the complaint involves a staff member employed by another part of CUPE, the person responsible for their employment will be the one to whom a complaint is referred and the relevant collective agreement, should it exist, would be applicable.
4. Once a complaint is received where an ombudsperson is being used, the ombudsperson will work to seek a resolution.
5. If this fails to resolve the matter, the ombudsperson shall report the matter to the person in charge, who shall determine whether there is need to remove the member. The person in charge has the authority to expel members from the event for serious or persistent offenses.
6. At CUPE National events where an ombudsperson is not available, a person properly appointed and designated to be in charge shall receive the complaint. Depending on the nature of the problem, the person in charge may attempt to resolve it through conflict resolution. If this fails to resolve the matter, the person in charge shall determine whether there is a need to remove the member. The person in charge has the authority to expel members from the event for serious or persistent offenses. The same process is to be used for other parts of CUPE where an ombudsperson is not available.
7. For National events, if the person in charge is a party to the complaint, the director or designate shall assume that role. For all other parts of CUPE, an alternate will be designated to assume the role.
8. In a case where a member has been expelled from an event, the National President shall receive a report on the matter. For all other structures of CUPE, the presiding officer shall receive a report on the matter.
9. For events organized by CUPE National, the National President shall determine if further remedial action is appropriate, including restricting a member's participation in future events organized by CUPE National. A similar process may be applicable to the other parts of CUPE, done in consultation with the National President.

This Code of Conduct is designed to create a safe, respectful and supportive environment within all parts of CUPE. It is meant to enhance the rights and obligations outlined in the CUPE National Constitution, the Equality Statement, and applicable human rights legislation, not replace them.

All chartered organizations are subject to this Code of Conduct, to apply to conventions, conferences, schools, and meetings which they organize.